

City of Alexandria, Virginia

Pocket Park Improvement Plans

Final Draft Plan



January 16, 2020

Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Activities
Park Planning, Capital Development & Waterfront Division

Typology Park Plans



Park typology planning goal supporting Department Strategic Plan

Ensure a citywide open space system that equitably brings together our vibrant and diverse community and invests in the environment, while managing our resources responsibly.

1. Citywide Park Plans (10-50 acres) – plan completed in 2013
to be updated 2021-2023
2. Neighborhood Park Plans (0.5 – 1- acres) – plan completed in 2016
3. Pocket Park Plans (0.5 and under) – expected completion 2020

25 Pocket Parks



Pocket Park Planning Process



	Spring 2018	Summer 2018	Spring 2019	Summer 2019	Fall 2019	Winter 2020
Existing Conditions Research						
Obtain Community Feedback						
Create Draft Park Plans						
Obtain Community Feedback on the Plans						
Adjust Plans based on Feedback						
Conduct Cost Estimates						
Publically Release Plan and Seek PRC endorsement						

Goals for all Pocket Parks



1. Wayfinding
2. Meeting needs while being flexible with small spaces
3. Incorporating nature
4. Creating social connections



Portner Park Draft Improvement Plan



Portner Park: 513 N Washington Street Improvement Recommendations

1 Add a park welcome sign

Add a park welcome sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park and to help create more place making in this park.

2 Install game tables and seating

Community feedback indicated a desire for a community gathering spot. Installing game tables, similar to the tables at 3550 Commonwealth Avenue Park, would provide an opportunity to create social connections for both older children and adults.

3 Add natural play features

Community feedback indicated a desire for play features for children in this park. Installing natural play features, such as boulders, logs, and stepping-stones, will provide play opportunities throughout the park.

4 Seek partner agreements with neighbors on park plantings

The park is for public use. Many private properties have planted within the park boundary. An agreement would ensure the plants are appropriate variety and non-invasive.

5 Explore an additional park entrance

Community feedback indicated that the single entrance to the park limits access and makes visiting the park challenging. Explore adding an additional park entrance using an existing easement or through acquiring an additional easement to help make the park accessible to more neighbors.



Portner Park Final Improvement Plan



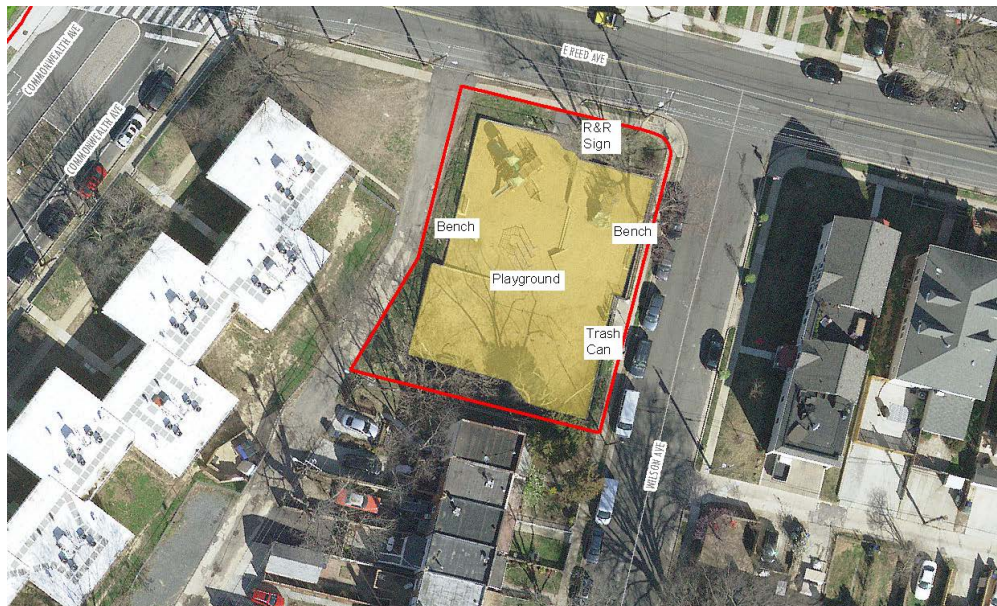
Portner Park: 1427 Powhatan Street

Improvement Recommendations



Lynhaven Park

Draft Improvement Plan



Lynhaven Park: 5 East Reed Avenue Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Plant trees around the park**
Planting trees in the grass area outside of the fence along Reed Avenue and the alley will provide shade inside the playground without taking space from the playground area.
- 2 Add a park welcome sign**
Add a park welcome sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park.
- 3 Install a stroller parking area**
Convert the flat hardscape area near the entrance to the park along Wilson Avenue and designate as stroller parking area.
- 4 Update existing playground and provide equipment for multiple age groups**
The current playground is outdated standard playground equipment, mainly focused on ages 5-12. Community feedback indicated that there is a need for additional structures that interest multiple ages and promote more imaginative play.
- 5 Create shaded social seating areas**
Community feedback indicated a need for gathering space for parents to relax and socialize while their children play. This can include shade structures and tables.
- 6 Convert an area of mulch away from the play features to blacktop**
Community feedback indicated a need for variation in ground surface in the park that could be used for various activities, especially for older children. A blacktop surface could provide multiple uses. One potential use of this blacktop surface is a traffic garden, a painted miniature roadway with markings that demonstrate various roadway scenarios.



Lynhaven Park

Final Improvement Plan

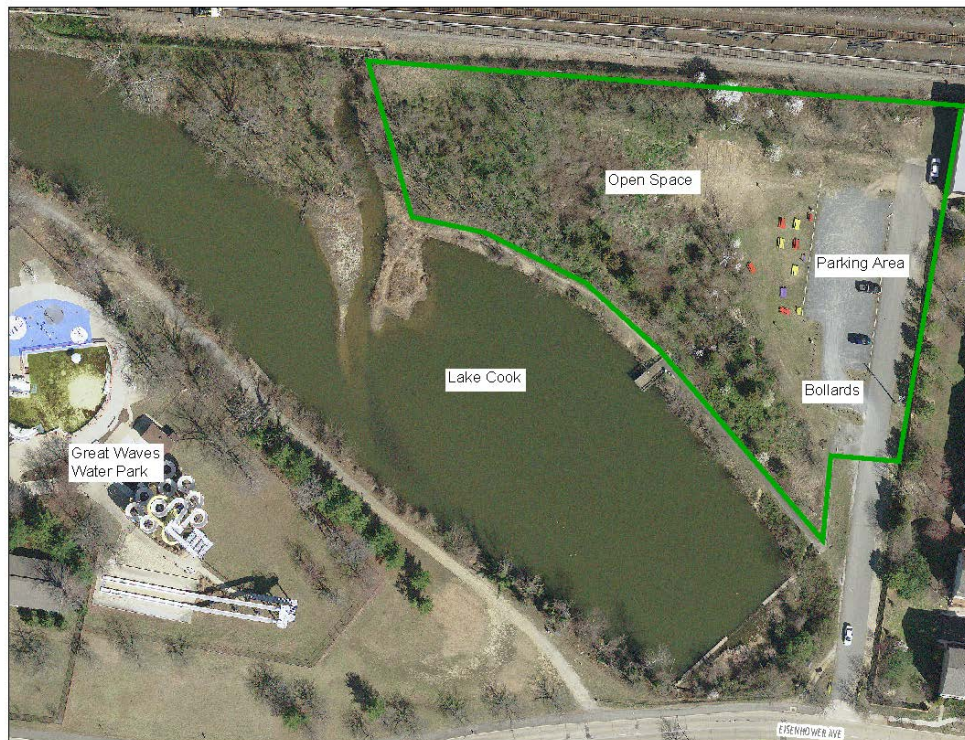


Lynhaven Park: 5 East Reed Avenue

Improvement Recommendations



Lake Cook Pocket Park Draft Improvement Plan



Lake Cook Pocket Park: 3911 Eisenhower Ave Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Install nature inspired play features**
Community feedback indicated a desire for additional opportunities for children to play in the park. Install a playground with nature inspired features for children of all ages. Locate the playground outside of the resource protection area.
- 2 Install a bat house**
Community feedback indicated a desire to enhance nature throughout the park and to control insects naturally. Bats are an important part of the ecosystem, they eat mosquitos and other insects and act as pollinators. Install a bat house to attract bats to the park. Work with the Natural Resources Division to ensure the bat house is installed in an appropriate location.
- 3 Invasive species management**
The Natural Resources Division will manage invasive species in the park as part of its operating program.
- 4 Plant native trees in wooded areas**
By planting sapling native trees in the wooded areas around the park, these will over time, replace trees that decline naturally. Also, evaluate the plantings around the lake and throughout the park and supplement as needed.
- 5 Add seating and shade structures**
Community feedback indicated a need for shaded seating and gathering spaces. Install picnic table seating and shade structures that could be used as a gathering area for caregivers, multi-generational gatherings, and community gatherings.
- 6 Plant trees to serve as barrier**
Vehicles park along the side of the access road, killing the small plants and creating muddy conditions, instead of driving into the park and parking in the provided parking lot. Trees will serve as a natural barrier along the access road and guide park visitors to the parking lot.
- 7 Install Bike Share Station**
Transportation & Environmental Services is considering installing a Bike Share station near the Cameron Run bike trail. This station would provide a needed connection point in the bike share network along the busy Cameron Run bike trail. The selected location will need to allow a vehicle to access the station to "rebalance" bikes between stations.
- 8 Improve park access from Eisenhower Avenue**
Provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bike crossings into the park. This may include additional crosswalks, updating existing crosswalks to high visibility, an improved intersection, and shortened crossing distance through installation of refuge islands or realigning the crosswalks. A transportation analysis will be coordinated by Transportation and Environmental Services.
- 9 Mark the loop trail with a ¼ mile sign**
The new loop trail around the lake is ¼ mile long. Mark the trail to indicate the length.
- 10 Evaluate park needs based on use since renovation**
The area around the lake was extensively renovated in 2018 as part of a stormwater retrofit project. Evaluate use and park needs since the renovation, paying particular attention to school groups, fishing patterns, and neighborhood use.
- 11 Explore partnerships with NOVA Parks for bathroom access**
Community feedback indicated a desire for bathrooms or port-a-johns to be installed in the park. Explore partnerships and signage with NOVA Parks to provide a bathroom for park users at Cameron Run Regional Park.



DRAFT

Lake Cook Pocket Park Final Improvement Plan



Lake Cook Pocket Park: 3911 Eisenhower Ave Improvement Recommendations



Sunset Mini Draft Improvement Plan



Sunset Mini Park: 4 Sunset Drive Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Move fence to designate use areas**
The fence is currently around the entire park, and community feedback indicated that many people are not aware this is a park. Moving the fence so that it is only around the playground opens up the rest of the park to passers-by and creates a more inviting space for all ages.
- 2 Renovate the playground**
The playground equipment is limited in this park and does not adequately use the available space. The current playground was renovated in 2007. When appropriate to renovate the full playground, consider a train theme given the proximity to train tracks that serve Amtrak and WMATA trains.
- 3 Add social seating area**
This park could be a gateway into the City from the WMATA/Amtrak stations and be a good place for families and visitors who use the train to picnic and play. Add picnic benches or Adirondack chairs in the grass area near the cherry trees to create a community gathering area.
- 4 Add a park welcome sign**
Add a park welcome sign to meet the City's wayfinding standards and invite park users into the park and to help create more place making in this park.
- 5 Improve park access from King Street**
Improve the pedestrian crossing to the park across Sunset Drive to provide safe and accessible access from King Street. This may include updating the existing crosswalk to high visibility and updating the ADA access ramps at the intersection of Sunset Drive and King Street.
- 6 Consider public art**
Work with the Office of the Arts to appropriately integrate public art into the design process for this park.
- 7 Transportation and Environmental Services is considering improvements to the design of the King Street, Callahan Drive, and Russell Road intersection.**



Sunset Mini Final Improvement Plan



Sunset Mini Park: 4 Sunset Drive Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Move fence to designate use areas
The fence is currently around the entire park, and community feedback indicated that many people are not aware this is a park. Move the fence back to allow access to the benches without entering the playground. This opens up the rest of the park to passers-by and creates a more inviting space for all ages.
- 2 Renovate the playground
The playground equipment is limited in this park and does not adequately use the available space. The current playground was renovated in 2007. When appropriate, renovate the full playground and consider a train theme given the proximity to train tracks that serve Amtrak and WMATA trains.
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Work with the Office of the Arts to appropriately integrate public art into the design process for this park.
- * The Transportation & Environmental Services Division is considering improvements to the design of the King Street, Callahan Drive, and Russell Road intersection.



Woodbine Tot Lot Draft Improvement Plan



Woodbine Tot Lot: 1509 Woodbine Street Improvement Recommendations



- 1 Update park signage**
The existing park welcome sign will be updated to the current standard.
- 2 Add additional seating**
Install picnic table seating that could be used as a gathering area for caregivers and for multi-generational gatherings. Also install multi-tiered seating near the playground that can be used as a gathering area for caregivers and allows them to see children throughout the playground.
- 3 Renovate and reconfigure the playground**
The existing playground is outdated and does not meet the community needs. It can be difficult for caregivers to see children throughout the playground due to the location of the equipment. The play equipment will be updated with new structures for multiple age groups.
- 4 Add a gate to the alley**
Community feedback indicated that families along Dogwood Drive would like to access the park through the alley. Along with a gate, additional signage in the alley would need to be installed warning drivers that children are present.
- 5 Add paint/thermoplastic to the alley**
To add additional color and visibility to the alley near the playground, install a thermoplastic or painted design in the alley along the length of the playground. This acts as a safety feature to help cars slow down and adds color and vibrancy to the park.



Whitaker's Wish



In 2019, the Make-A-Wish Foundation approached the City of Alexandria with a wish from a local four year old. Whitaker has bravely battled cancer and is currently waiting for his wish. Whitaker absolutely loves going to the Woodbine Tot Lot across the street from his house and has asked to renovate the playground and add some special items to make the tot lot extra special for himself and all his neighborhood friends.

The Make-A-Wish project will renovate Woodbine Tot Lot, per the Whitaker's wishes. Make-A-Wish will hire a designer to work with the community and a contractor to renovate the playground, with RPCA oversight. The playground design will take into consideration the draft Pocket Park Plan.

Through the Community Matching Fund, the City of Alexandria, is offering a \$25,000 grant and Make-A-Wish is matching these funds.

Woodbine Tot Lot Final Improvement Plan



Woodbine Tot Lot: 1509 Woodbine Street Improvement Recommendations

- 1 Update park signage**
Update the existing park welcome sign to the current city standard.
- 2 Add additional seating**
Install picnic table seating to be used as a gathering area for caregivers and for multi-generational gatherings. Install multi-tiered seating near the playground to be used as a gathering area for caregivers and allows them to see children throughout the playground.
- 3 Renovate and reconfigure the playground**
The existing playground is outdated and does not meet the community needs. Update the play equipment with new structures for multiple age groups. Community feedback indicated a need for shade in this park. Install a shade structure, such as a shade sail, as part of the playground renovation. Reconfigure the park's entryway to a non-mulch surface to make it easier for caretakers with strollers to get in and out of the park.
- 4 Add a gate to the alley and reconfigure fence**
Community feedback indicated that families along Dogwood Drive would like to access the park through the alley. Replace the fence with a city standard green fence and reconfigure it to allow a buffer zone between the alley and the park for caregivers, children, and strollers. Along with a gate, additional signage in the alley will need to be installed warning drivers that children are present.
- 5 Add paint/thermoplastic to the alley**
Install a thermoplastic or painted design in the alley along the length of the playground to add additional color and visibility. This acts as a safety feature to help cars slow down and adds color and vibrancy to the park.



Next Steps



1. Receive cost estimates and prioritize recommendations
2. Receive endorsement or changes from Park and Recreation Commission based on public hearing
3. Staff will make changes to the plan as advised by the PRC
4. Integrate recommendations into CIP process and seek alternative funding sources